

STANDARDS AND
BEST PRACTICES
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PREFACE

The *Standards and Best Practices* Manual is the product of the Chief Evaluators (Human Services Managers) of the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS). The Manual is intended to unite all segments of DRS Vocational Evaluation Services in Virginia in an organized fashion to promote consistency of standards and practices under the leadership of the Chief Evaluators who will serve as "Quality Assurance Consults."

PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Standards and Best Practices* Manual for the Department of Rehabilitative Services, Commonwealth of Virginia's Vocational Evaluation Programs is to define standards and practices that assure that all vocational evaluation practitioners follow established quality assurance methodologies. As such, the Manual is not designed to be an operational "how to" treatise. The *Standards and Best Practices* Manual provides guidance and assures that all persons with disabilities are provided quality evaluation services from vocational evaluation programs in the Department of Rehabilitative Services.

MISSION OF DRS-VOCATIONAL EVALUATION PROGRAMS

The Department of Rehabilitative Services' Vocational Evaluation Programs support the Agency in the delivery of comprehensive rehabilitation services by providing a systematic, objective analysis of an individual's abilities and limitations as they relate to successful vocational activity in meaningful, gainful employment.

DEFINITION OF VOCATIONAL EVALUATION

Vocational Evaluation is a comprehensive, systematic, organized assessment process that uses a combination of work activities/samples, psychometrics, behavioral observations and other techniques to assess the presence and extent of vocational strengths, weaknesses, barriers to employment, and functional limitations in order to make recommendations that will utilize individual strengths and effectively alleviate or remove identified vocational barriers and/or functional limitations utilizing assistive technology/devices as appropriate.

CONTENT OF VOCATIONAL EVALUATION

Vocational evaluation services shall utilize methods that assess skills and abilities, vocational barriers and/or functional limitations relative to gainful employment in an integrated setting. The content of any vocational evaluation must, therefore, reflect the needs of the individual with a disability and the referral source. It is not the intent of the evaluation process to find out all there is to know about an individual. Rather, the intent is to assess those skills, abilities and barriers that affect employment and make recommendations that will utilize individual strengths/abilities, alleviate identified barriers and identify reasonable accommodations. The following areas shall be addressed in the vocational evaluation report but may not be necessarily directly assessed:

1. CLIENT'S VOCATIONAL INTERESTS
2. CLIENT'S VOCATIONAL GOALS
3. CLIENT'S REHABILITATION PLANS
4. PERFORMANCE SKILLS AND APTITUDES
5. WORK RELATED BEHAVIORS
6. TRANSFERABLE SKILLS
7. PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES
8. MENTAL/EMOTIONAL CAPABILITIES
9. LEARNING STYLES
10. INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS
11. JOB SEEKING/JOB RETENTION SKILLS
12. VOCATIONAL BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT
13. FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS
14. ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY/DEVICES
15. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION NEEDS AND MODIFICATIONS
16. OTHER LIFE INTERESTS

TYPES OF VOCATIONAL EVALUATIONS

All vocational evaluation services are provided in order to collect sufficient information regarding a client's strengths, abilities and/or barriers to employment so that logical and workable recommendations are made. Vocational evaluation services shall be provided in a manner that is the least restrictive to the client in terms of methods of assessment and duration of the program. Three basic types of assessment approaches are offered: **Comprehensive, Special Assessment and Consultation.**

All DRS evaluation centers adapt their service provision methods to address the needs of the client and the referral source. Most clients receive a "comprehensive" vocational evaluation, however, "single trait assessments" and "consultations" are also utilized as needed or upon request.

A "comprehensive" vocational evaluation typically utilizes all or a part of various techniques such as; orientation, interview, psychometrics, assessment of vocational interests, aptitudes, job seeking skills, independent living skills, job retention skills, learning styles, physical capabilities, assistive technology/devices, accommodation needs, work samples/activities, situational assessment, behavior observations, career exploration and any other available component which addresses the client's needs. All comprehensive vocational evaluations result in recommendations for current and/or future planning for skill development, accommodations and/or elimination of vocational barriers. All vocational evaluations shall consider the client's stated vocational interests as well as their desired rehabilitation plan.

"Comprehensive" vocational evaluations follow a basic process. The client is assigned a vocational evaluator acting as a program manager, who assists in developing an Individual Vocational Evaluation Plan (IVEP), {see Page 13} and participates in the program only as long as necessary to accomplish specific vocational evaluation goals.

"Single Trait" and/or "Special Request" assessments respond to a basic question regarding a single quality or aptitude. Typically, the Evaluator will administer only one or more tests to respond to questions such as: What is the client's reading level? Does the client have typing ability? These types of vocational evaluation requests do not follow the *normal* process. In this type of assessment, the client is assigned a program manager but an Individual Vocational Evaluation Plan (IVEP) is not required. A basic orientation to the evaluation center is given. Reasons for the process and the outcome of the assessment are shared with the

client. Again, the client's views shall be expressed and taken into consideration during the evaluation.

"Consultations" respond to questions regarding interpretation of existing data. The referral source may:

- want elaboration on an existing vocational evaluation report
- ask if the client is feasible for vocational evaluation
- ask if there are transferable skills
- ask if there are other vocational options for the client based on existing information.

The Evaluator is asked to respond to the referral source's questions directly. Consultations are typically written, although they may be verbal.

The findings and recommendations of the vocational evaluation provide specific information instrumental in vocational planning in the development of the Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan by the client and the Rehabilitation Counselor (sponsor).

SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT

"Situational Assessment" is the systematic observation process of evaluating work-related behaviors in a controlled/simulated work setting. Although any type of task or situation may be used, "real work" is often used in order to add relevance or "*face validity*." The element distinguishing this technique from other types of assessment techniques is the capability to systematically vary demands in order to evaluate work-related behavior, e.g., social skills, quantity of work, use of tools, and materials. This method is used frequently for school age youth, vocationally inexperienced individuals, and for persons who are being considered for supported employment programs. "Situational Assessment" typically is not conducted in the field vocational evaluation programs. When the need for this assessment occurs, evaluation staff may recommend the service be provided by the WWRC Vocational Evaluation Program or DRS approved private vendors.

REFERRAL PROCESS

Admission Criteria:

Vocational evaluation services are provided without regard to sex, race, national origin, religious preference or disability. Each individual admitted to the program must meet the following criteria:

- BE IN A REHABILITATION PROGRAM SPONSORED BY AN AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION; I.E., DRS, PRIVATE REHABILITATION VENDORS, VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VISUALLY HANDICAPPED (VDVH)
- BE FORMALLY REFERRED FOR VOCATIONAL EVALUATION SERVICES
- BE IN A STABLE PHYSICAL/MENTAL CONDITION, E.G., SEIZURES UNDER CONTROL OR NOT PSYCHOTIC
- IF A COMPREHENSIVE VOCATIONAL EVALUATION HAS BEEN CONDUCTED WITHIN THE LAST TWO YEARS, SUPPORTING EVIDENCE MUST EXIST SHOWING THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS WERE ATTEMPTED; THE REASONS FOR FAILURE OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS NOTED; OR THAT SIGNIFICANT CHANGES HAVE OCCURRED IN THE INDIVIDUAL'S STATUS. HOWEVER, THIS DOCUMENTATION IS NOT NECESSARY FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN A PREVIOUS VOCATIONAL EVALUATION PRIMARILY FOR THE PURPOSE OF CAREER EXPLORATION; AS WOULD BE THE CASE WITH SCHOOL AGE YOUTH.

Referral Procedures

Referrals are made to the vocational evaluation center programs by DRS Counselors, other agencies, organizations, and individuals. All referrals shall include the name and address of the referral source, as well as the "case manager". Referrals may be initiated during any stage of the rehabilitation process when a vocational evaluation is necessary to make the following determinations:

- feasibility for DRS services with respect to employment
- suitable vocational objectives
- the nature and scope of rehabilitation services to be provided, i.e., assessment of whether DRS services will result in a competitive employment outcome, the type of services needed to remove barriers and an appropriate vocational objective.

Vocational evaluation results may be used to assist in determining eligibility; however, the rehabilitation

counselor has the ultimate responsibility for eligibility determination.

Appropriate Referrals

Vocational evaluation services are provided for individuals with disabilities who are:

1. UNEMPLOYED OR UNDEREMPLOYED
2. PHYSICALLY, EMOTIONALLY AND/OR MENTALLY DISABLED
3. THOSE WHO LACK VOCATIONAL GOALS, VOCATIONAL DIRECTION OR IDENTIFIED/IDENTIFIABLE VOCATIONAL OBJECTIVES.

Referral Information

Requested referral information typically includes medical, psychological, educational, social and employment histories. Pertinent demographic information is collected on the referral application. If the individual is sponsored by DRS, the referral form must be accompanied by the Referral(RS-4), Continuation Sheet (RS-4-0) and the Medical Form(RS-3) or equivalent medical/psychological information. Some information may be waived by the Evaluator or the Chief Evaluator. No referral will be accepted without pertinent medical and/or psychological information that includes the diagnosis and prognosis as well as the functional limitations. All information received shall be current and sufficiently comprehensive to determine whether a client appears ready to benefit from vocational evaluation services. In addition, the referring source is requested to specify the reason(s) for referral and to identify specific questions to be answered during the evaluation, such as;

1. WHAT ARE THE CLIENT'S TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS?
2. DOES THE CLIENT HAVE COLLEGE POTENTIAL?
3. CAN THE CLIENT BENEFIT FROM PARTICIPATION IN A VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM?

Whenever possible, and when appropriate, it is requested that the referral source provide information about the local job market to which the individual will return so that the vocational evaluation may focus on those jobs. The referral source shall make all necessary arrangements for transportation, meals and other accommodations as well as for payment of the established per diem fee, if applicable.

Screening Referrals

Referrals are screened at each evaluation center to determine if a vocational evaluation is needed, to determine if supporting data is included and/or to select the most appropriate type of vocational evaluation.

The process for screening referrals depends on the size of the program, availability of services and the number of referrals received. Most Centers use an admissions committee composed of the supervisor and one or more of the professional staff. In some Centers, it may be appropriate for support staff to review the applications in order to check if all supporting documents are included.

After all the information has been received, the referral package is reviewed for completeness and appropriateness. If additional or updated information is necessary, the referral source must provide the needed data or state why the requested information cannot be supplied. If the referral information supports admission of the client, a program manager and an evaluation start date are assigned.

If the applicant does not meet the admission criteria or is considered otherwise inappropriate, the referral may be denied for one of the following reasons:

1. LACK OF SUFFICIENT, UPDATED MEDICAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL DOCUMENTATION.
2. EVALUATION AT A LATER DATE WOULD PROVIDE A MORE ACCURATE DETERMINATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S OPTIMAL FUNCTIONAL VOCATIONAL CAPACITY, BECAUSE OF INSTABILITY OF THE CLIENT'S PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITION OR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS NOT YET DEFINED.
3. THE EVALUATION MAY EXACERBATE A CURRENT MEDICAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITION.
4. EVIDENCE THAT A COMPREHENSIVE VOCATIONAL EVALUATION HAS BEEN COMPLETED WITHIN THE PAST TWO (2) YEARS AND REFERRAL INFORMATION FAILS TO INDICATE SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN CLIENT CONDITION OR THAT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERVICE(S) HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTED AND/OR FAILED.

If documentation is supplied to address the above reasons for denial, the individual will be considered for admission into the evaluation program.

Vocational Evaluation Intake Process

Individual assignments are based on providing quality services to the most persons in the least amount of time. To accomplish this goal, a group approach is utilized when appropriate.

Groups shall be formed of compatible individuals, considering the following criteria:

- THE CLIENT'S DISABILITY
- DISABILITY OF OTHER CLIENTS ASSIGNED TO THE GROUP
- THE CLIENT'S READING, ACADEMIC, AND FUNCTIONAL LEVELS
- THE READING, ACADEMIC, AND FUNCTIONAL LEVELS OF OTHER CLIENTS ASSIGNED TO THE GROUP.

To determine client/evaluator ratios, the following questions shall be considered:

- IS THE GROUP HOMOGENOUS IN TERMS OF PHYSICAL CAPACITY, ACADEMIC AND INTELLECTUAL LEVELS?
- IS THE INITIAL TESTING TO BE COMPLETED INDIVIDUALLY OR IN A GROUP?
- ARE FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS OF GROUP PARTICIPANTS KNOWN?
- IN THE EVENT THAT A GROUP MEMBER NEEDS INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION, WILL THE PROCESS ALLOW SUCH ATTENTION?
- DO THE TESTS SELECTED REQUIRE INTENSIVE OBSERVATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S PROGRESS?

Orientation and initial screening batteries are administered on a group basis periodically. The initial group may exceed six clients provided other staff are available to assist as needed. In areas of the state where the evaluator may be the sole service provider, it is suggested that one person per office site be trained to provide "A" level testing* in cases where the client cannot continue in a group setting. It is suggested that this individual also be trained to administer the General Aptitude Test Battery or similar psychometric group assessment technique when the evaluator must attend to the needs of an individual client.

* An "A Level Test" is defined as an assessment instrument requiring no interpretation of the results.

NOTE: A Program Support Technician or Psychological Test Technician may administer selected instruments at the direction of the Vocational Evaluator.

Review of Referral Data

After a client has been accepted and scheduled for vocational evaluation services, the Vocational Evaluator or a WWRC Vocational Evaluation Counselor* assigned as program manager conducts a comprehensive review of all referral data as a preliminary step in the evaluation program planning process. Further information shall be requested at this time, if necessary, to ensure that rehabilitation problems to be addressed are fully documented and understood prior to the selection of evaluation methodologies.

* (NOTE: At WWRC, responsibilities are shared between the Vocational Evaluator and the Vocational Evaluation Counselor. For the purposes of this manual, it is implied that either or both professionals are included whenever there is a reference to the position of Vocational Evaluator.)

VOCATIONAL EVALUATION PROCESS

Initial Appraisal:

To expedite the evaluation process for the incoming client, the Vocational Evaluator develops an initial outline for each client of the evaluation areas that require special emphasis, the tests to be administered, and the methodologies to be employed. This process is designed to provide maximum opportunity for clients to participate in the evaluation and to ensure that the assessment approaches are appropriate for answering the referral questions and additional questions. Adaptive measures, devices or accommodations are identified and provided. If adaptations or accommodations are needed once the client is in the evaluation process, the Evaluator consults with other rehabilitation professionals as appropriate.

IVEP Development:

Development of the Individualized Vocational Evaluation Plan (IVEP) begins at the time of the referral. Evaluation questions may include, but are not limited to:

1. CAN THE PERSON BENEFIT FROM PARTICIPATING IN A REHABILITATION PROGRAM WITH RESPECT TO EMPLOYMENT?
2. WHAT ARE THE CLIENT'S APTITUDES?

3. WHAT ARE THE CLIENT'S INTERESTS?
4. DOES THE CLIENT HAVE THE CAPACITY FOR A FULL WORK DAY?
5. WHAT ARE THE CLIENT'S TRANSFERABLE SKILLS?
6. DOES THE PERSON HAVE COLLEGE POTENTIAL?

By using the IVEP, the assessment process becomes client centered, facilitating the evaluation in terms of efficiency and focus. All IVEPs are flexible, allowing for modification of assessment instruments and design to meet the needs and encourage participation of the individual. **It is essential that the client be involved in the IVEP development. Like the Individual Written Rehabilitation Program, the IVEP is a "client-driven" document designed to use a mutual decision making process that will facilitate maximum benefit from vocational evaluation for all clients.** At the conclusion of the vocational evaluation process, the IVEP shall reflect the findings of the evaluation and describe the recommendations. The IVEP shall be signed twice: at the beginning of the evaluation process to indicate that the client understands the focus, nature and reasons for the assessment and its process, and at the end of the evaluation to indicate that the client understands the recommendations. The IVEP also contains a section for the client to provide feedback about the assessment process.

Appropriate use of the IVEP facilitates ongoing interaction and open communication among the client, the referral source and the Evaluator. This facilitates a common understanding of the evaluation program, specifies questions to be addressed and identifies the tools/ techniques to meet the needs of the referral source and the client.

Client Orientation to Vocational Evaluation

Orientation to the evaluation center and the vocational evaluation process is conducted when the client first enters the program.

Modifications are made depending upon the population, but each client receives at least the following:

- A TOUR OF THE FACILITY AND AN ORIENTATION TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND EXITS
- A REVIEW OF CENTER RULES AND REGULATIONS AND CLIENT RIGHTS-A COPY OF WHICH IS PROVIDED TO THE CLIENT FOR SIGNATURE

- A DETAILED EXPLANATION OF THE PURPOSE OF VOCATIONAL EVALUATION, INCLUDING AN ESTIMATE OF THE LENGTH OF TIME IN THE PROGRAM
- AN EXPLANATION OF THE IVEP, WHAT IT IS, WHY IT IS USED AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CLIENT'S INPUT AND ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN THE VOCATIONAL EVALUATION PROCESS
- AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CLIENT TO ASK QUESTIONS/EXPRESS CONCERNS

Client Initial Interview:

The Initial Interview is a one-to-one process for the purposes of providing informational exchange and building rapport with the client. The Initial Interview provides staff with additional information while also including the client as an active participant in the vocational evaluation planning process.

After the broad review of the evaluation process through the Orientation, the Evaluator conducts an Initial Interview which serves the following purposes:

- TO EXCHANGE VOCATIONALLY RELEVANT INFORMATION WHICH CONTRIBUTES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IVEP
- TO ESTABLISH RAPPORT TO DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CLIENT AND THE EVALUATOR
- TO GATHER FURTHER DIAGNOSTIC INFORMATION AND TO CONFIRM OR TO CLARIFY INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM OTHER SOURCES
- TO OBSERVE THE CLIENT'S NON-VERBAL BEHAVIOR
- TO PROVIDE THE CLIENT THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS OR MAKE SUGGESTIONS ABOUT HIS/HER IVEP PRIOR TO SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT

Goal Planning

Goal planning usually begins with the DRS Counselor (or other referral sources) and is the major focus of the vocational evaluation report. This process encompasses the initial objectives for the vocational evaluation and extends, via the IWRP, to the individual's long-range rehabilitation expectations and plans. In order to provide DRS Counselors (or other referral sources) with a report that will aid in the goal planning process, the evaluation programs usually take one of three courses of action with

regard to the development of a prescribed rehabilitation plan, as follows:

IF THE CLIENT IS PRESENTLY EMPLOYABLE (FREQUENTLY A DETERMINATION REACHED DURING THE EVALUATION PROCESS), THE EVALUATOR:

- DETERMINES THE LEVEL AT WHICH THE CLIENT IS PRESENTLY CAPABLE OF FUNCTIONING (THIS MAY INCLUDE PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND/OR EMOTIONAL CAPABILITIES DEPENDING ON THE CLIENT'S DISABILITY AND ASSESSMENT FINDINGS)
- PROVIDES VOCATIONAL EXPLORATION TO AID THE CLIENT'S SELECTION OF AN APPROPRIATE GOAL
- MAKES SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING AREAS OF POSSIBLE JOB PLACEMENT (INCLUDING JOB TITLES AND D.O.T. NUMBERS)

IF THE INDIVIDUAL IS POTENTIALLY EMPLOYABLE BUT DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE PREPARED FOR IMMEDIATE JOB PLACEMENT, THE EVALUATOR:

- DEFINES THE LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY AT WHICH THE CLIENT IS PRESENTLY AND POTENTIALLY CAPABLE OF FUNCTIONING
- PROVIDES VOCATIONAL EXPLORATION TO HELP THE CLIENT SELECT AN APPROPRIATE OCCUPATIONAL GOAL
- DEVELOPS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A REHABILITATION PLAN DESIGNED TO BRING ABOUT NEEDED CHANGES PRIOR TO INTEGRATED, GAINFUL, COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT
- MAKES SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND POSSIBLE JOB PLACEMENT

IF THERE IS CLEAR AND CONVINCING EVIDENCE FROM THE ASSESSMENT THAT THE CLIENT IS NOT COMPETITIVELY EMPLOYABLE THE EVALUATOR:

- DOCUMENTS REASONS FOR PRESENT UNEMPLOYABILITY
- DEFINES THE LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY AT WHICH THE CLIENT IS POTENTIALLY CAPABLE OF FUNCTIONING
- RECOMMENDS ALTERNATIVES SUCH AS SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT, VOLUNTEER OR AVOCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Test Selection/Purchasing-Prior Approval Requirements

To promote unification of standards, practices and to provide quality services under the program management of DRS; all new tests and assessment equipment, **prior to their purchase and implementation** will be reviewed by a panel appointed by the Chief Evaluators and composed of a representative from each DRS Vocational Evaluation Center and a DRS Psychologist.

This panel will carefully review all manuals, answer sheets and normative data prior to approving any test or equipment purchase. After consultation with the Chief Evaluator, a sample of the test may be bought and administered on a trial basis. If positive results are obtained, the test may be recommended for statewide purchase and use.

Test Selection-General

In order to assess an individual's vocational potential, it is critical to select evaluation procedures that will ensure an accurate assessment. Use of the following guidelines will provide the Evaluator and the client with the most accurate information:

- TEST SELECTION IS INDIVIDUALIZED, BASED ON THE NEEDS OF THE CLIENT. OVERUSE OF ANY TEST SHALL BE AVOIDED. OVERUSE IS CHARACTERIZED BY BLANKET PROGRAMMATIC STANDARDS THAT STATE "ON MONDAYS ALL CLIENTS WILL TAKE THE WRAT." ADMINISTRATION OF TESTS TO CLIENTS WHERE INFORMATION IS ALREADY KNOWN IS WASTEFUL. THE EVALUATOR MAY EXPOSE THE CLIENT TO NEGATIVE TESTING SITUATIONS OR ARTIFICIALLY ENHANCED PERFORMANCE BECAUSE OF PRACTICE OR FAMILIARITY EFFECT.
- TEST SELECTION IS BASED ON A REVIEW OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION, INTERESTS, SKILL LEVELS AND ABOVE ALL THE NEED TO KNOW THE INFORMATION THAT THE TEST WILL PROVIDE. "NICE TO KNOW" INFORMATION THAT IS NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE REMOVAL OF VOCATIONAL BARRIERS IS AVOIDED. FOR EXAMPLE, IF INFORMATION ABOUT "COLLEGE POTENTIAL" IS NOT NEEDED DUE TO SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF COLLEGE COURSES, OR ACCEPTABLE SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST SCORES, IT IS UNNECESSARY TO SUBJECT THE CLIENT TO ADDITIONAL TESTING JUST BECAUSE THE "PROCESS" SAYS TO INCLUDE IT. THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT THE PROCESS SHALL MEET THE CLIENT'S NEEDS NOT THAT THE CLIENT SHOULD

MEET THE NEEDS OF THE PROCESS.

- TESTS MUST MEASURE WHAT THEY ARE INTENDED TO MEASURE. INAPPROPRIATE TEST SELECTION OFTEN RESULTS IN MEASURING CHARACTERISTICS THAT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH VOCATIONAL GOAL SELECTION. FOR EXAMPLE; IF A CLIENT WITH RELATIVELY HIGH INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING AND/OR ACADEMIC SKILLS IS GIVEN A REPETITIVE TASK SUCH AS VALPAR #8 OR JEVS #1, IT IS LIKELY THAT THE INSTRUMENTS WILL MEASURE THE BOREDOM OF THE CLIENT AND NOT THE ABILITY TO PERFORM THE ACTIVITY. ANOTHER EXAMPLE IS A PSYCHOMETRIC TEST, SUCH AS THE GENERAL APTITUDE TEST BATTERY (GATB) THAT MAY MEASURE THE CLIENT'S LACK OF TEST SOPHISTICATION BUT NOT HIS/HER SPECIFIC ABILITIES. IN ALL CASES THE EVALUATOR MUST BE AWARE OF WHAT IS BEING MEASURED. THE EVALUATOR MUST TAKE PRECAUTIONS TO MAKE SURE THAT THE TEST IS ACTUALLY MEASURING WHAT IT IS INTENDED TO MEASURE.
- THE TEST ITSELF SHALL BE VALID AND RELIABLE. ALL TESTS MUST BE STATISTICALLY VALID AND RELIABLE AND BASED, WHERE POSSIBLE, ON INDUSTRIAL NORMS.
- THE EVALUATOR SHALL TAKE ANY TEST THAT HE/SHE PLANS TO GIVE. THE EVALUATOR SHALL HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIRECTIONS AND THE CONTENTS OF THE TEST.
- THE EVALUATOR SHALL BE AWARE OF THE TEST'S REQUIREMENTS; I.E., READING LEVELS, ETC., BEFORE ANY TEST IS ADMINISTERED. DUE TO SOCIAL PROMOTIONS AND OTHER FACTORS, THE SCHOOL GRADE COMPLETED MAY NOT BE A VALID INDICATOR OF THE CLIENT'S FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY.

Test selection-Special Considerations

The first priority in test selection is to ***use tests that will answer the questions on the IVEP and others raised during the evaluation.*** The needs of the referral sources shall be considered but they shall never override the needs of the person with a disability.

TEST SELECTION-PSYCHOMETRICS

Psychometrics are defined as standardized instruments, typically of the paper and pencil variety, that are used to measure aspects of aptitudes, vocational and other interests, cognitive abilities, attitudes toward a variety of subjects, psychomotor skills and various academic achievement levels including reading, comprehension, arithmetic and spelling.

GUIDELINES FOR PSYCHOMETRIC TEST SELECTION

The range of selection of psychometrics is wide and varied and is dependent on the following factors:

- Each test used must be standardized and normed.
- Each test selected must be considered valid and reliable.
- Where possible, norms shall include a cross sampling of the target population including the full spectrum of race, age, gender, geographic locations, educational levels and persons with disabilities.
- Aptitude testing shall be as culturally free as possible and shall assess potential skills not previous learning.
- Interest testing shall not be stereotypical regarding gender or race. This is particularly important when a test uses pictures instead of words. Interest inventories shall be available to cover a wide range of varied reading and academic levels. Interest inventories shall also cover a wide range of possible vocational pursuits.
- Achievement tests are designed to assess the current level of knowledge possessed by an individual. These tests, by function, are not designed to measure innate capacity to perform a certain task and should not be confused with aptitude tests. The skills assessed, by an achievement test, are specific to that exact subject matter. For example, if the evaluator wishes to know reading levels then the test shall only assess reading levels and not other factors such as the ability to follow directions.

TEST SELECTION-WORK SAMPLES

Work samples are defined work activities composed of the essential job tasks of an occupation or group of occupations that measure aptitudes, abilities, interests, motivation, essential work elements and the mental/physical functional levels of individuals. There are many types of work sample systems available for the vocational evaluator. Most systems fall into one of the following four categories:

A cluster trait work sample can be defined as: A work sample assessing several traits inherent in a group of related jobs. Based upon an analysis of occupational groupings and the traits necessary for successful performance, it is intended to assess the client's potential to do jobs having a common set of performance requirements. The VALPAR work sample system is an example of the cluster trait work sample.

A job sample is defined as: work samples that, in their entirety are replicated directly from industry and include the equipment, tools, raw materials, exact procedures and work standards of the job. These samples are rarely used because of the limiting nature of the assessment procedures, space needed for the sample, the difficulty in norming the data, and the lack of transferrable skill information obtained from the job sample results.

A simulated work sample is defined as: Work samples that replicate a segment of the essential work-related factors and tools of a job as it is performed in industry or trade related training. The simulated work sample may be developed by an evaluator based on job analysis of local industry. DRS Evaluation Center Developed work samples that are generated for specific vocational training or local job activity are examples of this category. "Singer" and "Choice" are examples of commercially developed simulated work samples.

Single trait work samples are defined as: Work samples that assess a single trait or characteristic. The sample may have relevance to a specific job or many jobs, but is intended to assess a single isolated factor. Many of these types of work samples are also simulated in the evaluation centers and may be under the category of "Center Developed." The term itself may be somewhat misleading for even in single trait samplings other skill areas may be needed and observed. For example, a task that measures manual dexterity may also assess visuo-spatial ability, depth perception, eye-hand

coordination and direction following capabilities. Examples of single trait sampling are color vision tests, finger dexterity tasks, etc.

In summary, the primary focus of all work samples is of a diagnostic nature. Assessment of vocational aptitudes, physical tolerances, strengths and limitations, frustration levels and other personal characteristics are all critical assessment factors needed, in most cases, prior to vocational prognostications. While the results of work samples are important for revealing abilities, skills and vocational potential, it is the interactive nature and the hands-on observations of the work sample that provides the observational data that indicates interest, work attitudes and other critical psychosocial information. In other words, the behavioral observations made by the vocational evaluator during the individual's work sample activities differentiate work samples from psychometrics.

GUIDELINES FOR WORK SAMPLE SELECTION

- All work samples are to be standardized and normed when possible.
- Each work sample selected must be valid and reliable.
- Each work sample, where possible, must be normed on a cross sampling of the population including a range of geographical areas, age, race, gender and (if possible) persons with disabilities.
- The work sample selected must be considered in direct relationship to the goals of the vocational evaluation which are, in turn, the goals of the referral source and the client.
- Work sample selection will be sufficiently broad to include measurements of aptitude (potential) and achievement (previous learning).
- Work samples will have a direct relationship with the Dictionary of Occupational Titles.
- Work samples are modified to meet the individual's accessibility needs, provided that those modifications can also be accomplished on the job which the work sample assesses.

TESTING ENVIRONMENT

All tests shall be administered in an atmosphere that is conducive to producing the highest results.

Physical Environment

PSYCHOMETRICS:

Psychometrics shall be administered in a well-lit, temperature controlled and noise-free environment. Distractions, such as pictures on the wall or background music, are eliminated. Work spaces are appropriate for the tasks with reasonable accommodations as necessary. Testing materials are free of previous attempts at answers. Pencils and scratch paper are supplied as needed. If testing is conducted in a group setting, clients are discouraged from talking during the actual test.

WORK SAMPLES:

All work samples shall be in good working order, with spare parts in sufficient quantity to complete the task. The environment shall simulate the nature of the work setting where possible. In other words, total silence, temperature controls, dust-free and other controls are not essential if the task reflects work that would not be performed in these conditions.

Emotional Environment

It is virtually impossible for the Evaluator to control the emotions of the client including such factors as test anxiety, poor attitude and self-defeating behavior. However, the Evaluator shall control his/her own attitude toward testing and the client. It is essential that the Evaluator be constantly aware that the client has probably never experienced anything like a vocational evaluation. The Evaluator may have given the test a thousand times but it is the client's first time. **The Evaluator shall be enthusiastic and professionally supportive throughout every aspect of the assessment process.**

TEST MODIFICATION

It is essential in any assessment situation that the client access the instruments, understand the directions, and have the opportunity to perform at his/her maximum potential. In order to accomplish this objective, at times it is necessary to modify the methods of test administration.

Modification can incorporate a number of techniques including:

- READERS
- WRITERS
- INTERPRETERS (SIGN, VOICE AND LANGUAGE)
- ASSISTIVE DEVICES
- MODIFICATION OF DIRECTIONS--CHANGING THE LANGUAGE OR THE CONTENT OF THE DIRECTIONS SO THAT THE CLIENT CAN UNDERSTAND THE TASK(S)
- MODIFICATION OF THE PHYSICAL LAYOUT--RAISING OR LOWERING A TABLE, ADMINISTERING A TEST OR WORK SAMPLE IN A SITTING OR STANDING POSITION
- POWER TESTING; I.E, ELIMINATION OF THE TIME CONSTRAINTS PLACED ON THE TEST TO ALLOW THE CLIENT TO COMPLETE TEST TASKS
- ADMINISTRATION OF INSTRUMENTS IN CONSIDERATION OF THE CLIENT'S PREFERRED LEARNING STYLE.

Such modifications shall be noted in the vocational evaluation report in the section presenting the results of the test(s). Most tests have standardized instructions, timing, prescribed physical layout, scoring and interpretation. Modification may negate the standardization of the instrument. However, in most instances, test directions and physical layout can be changed without inherently affecting standardization. The basic reason to give test directions is to provide the client with an understanding of the expectations of the task. If tests are used to indicate potential employment ability, then the job would have to be modified in the same way as the test was modified.

Modifications that relate to specific jobs shall be referenced in the vocational evaluation report. If the client has the ability to perform a task that relates directly to a specific job, the modification that was made on the task will be referenced so that the same modification may be made on the job.

Evaluator judgment is used in test/task modification and its effect on the standardization process. Evaluators shall document their professional judgment concerning the effect of the modification on standardization.

Concluding Testing

Testing is concluded when all the questions on the IVEP have been answered.

Exit Interview

The *Exit Interview* occurs at the end of the vocational evaluation process. The following procedures apply:

- All tests have been scored
- Results of all tests and interpretations are known
- Behavioral observations have been made
- Career exploration has been finalized
- The client has received an answer to the questions raised before and during the vocational evaluation process
- The Evaluator is ready to make specific recommendations

The results of the vocational evaluation shall be shared with the client throughout the evaluation and the recommendations shared upon conclusion. The client's signature on the IVEP indicates that the recommendations have been discussed and understood. The Evaluator shall ask probing questions to assess understanding of these recommendations and clearly provide the client another opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions about the evaluation process.

SHARING EVALUATION RESULTS

WHEN TO:

In almost all cases, the interpretative results gathered from various assessment methods shall be shared with the client. This sharing is an on-going process that begins as soon as any empirical results are known.

At the end of the process, a summary of all evaluation results is shared. At this time, there should be no major surprises, as evaluation results will have been discussed throughout the evaluation process.

WHEN NOT TO:

Vocational evaluation is not a treatment program. It is not appropriate to introduce information/issues that create a need for therapeutic intervention during the vocational evaluation process.

There may be times when it is not appropriate to share evaluation results with clients. The vocational evaluation process usually commences early in the client's rehabilitation program. In some instances, the client has not yet realized the full impact of his/her disability and is not ready for this reality check. Ideally, this is found out before vocational evaluation and the client's referral is delayed until a more appropriate time. However, despite good screening techniques and admission committee efforts, some client's are evaluated prior to their most propitious times. In cases where the Evaluator has determined that the client is not ready for the reality of assessment results and subsequent discussion of plans, a referral for guidance and counseling and possible therapy may be in the client's best interest. In addition, the results of assessments and behavioral observations made under these conditions may not be valid. Therefore, the Evaluator may recommend a return to vocational evaluation at a time when results may be more valid.

The client may have an emotional disability such that sharing information would create more difficulty. ***In all cases, Evaluator judgment will be used and the referral source will be notified when the results of the evaluation are not shared with the client.*** There are no clear rules governing these decisions. There are times when the client's overt behaviors make it clear that the sharing of this information would be harmful. These behaviors can be observed during testing, perhaps by the client's refusal to take a psychometric test or a refusal to accept that they may not be able to successfully complete a work sample. However, some emotional signs are covert and require the Evaluator's professional observation skills.

EXPLAINING INSTRUMENTS AND ASSESSMENT RESULTS:

Raw scores or *converted* scores are rarely shared with the client. Due to academic grading methods, the majority of people think that a score of 100 is perfect. However, a number of psychometric and work sample results may end in scores considerably above or below this number. Therefore, sharing actual *raw* or *converted* scores could result in confusion and incorrect interpretation by the client.

Sharing Behavioral Observations

Sharing behavioral observations with the client and other pertinent individuals is critical. These observations and professional judgments made by the Evaluator during and post assessment, are as critical as sharing actual empirical data. The Evaluator shares behavior observations and their potential impact on work environments as well as test interpretations. In sharing behavioral observations, the same professional judgment is used as indicted in the above section.

Discussing Recommendations

Observations and recommendations are shared with the client, using professional judgment. All observations and recommendations must be documented in the evaluation report. The evaluator may contact the referral source to discuss their observations and recommendations.

Evaluator and Counselor (Referral Source) Roles in Vocational Evaluation Recommendations:

EVALUATOR

The Vocational Evaluator explains results and recommendations in a clear and concise manner to facilitate the client's understanding of the evaluation process and the recommendations. The Evaluator will explain to the client that ***all rehabilitation plans are developed collaboratively by the client and the referral source responsible for the funding for the rehabilitation program.*** It is essential that no client complete the evaluation thinking that any particular rehabilitation plan will or will not be implemented. The Vocational Evaluator must be aware of policies, procedures and fiscal constraints, established by the Agency so that recommendations will not be construed as against policy. Also, recommendations must not specify a particular vendor, school or other program outside the Agency.

REFERRAL SOURCE:

The function of the referral source is to consider the recommendations of the vocational evaluation report and to discuss the contents of the report with the client. While there is no obligation on the part of the client or the referral source to follow the recommendations contained in the vocational evaluation report, they often are implemented as stated.

CLIENT'S ROLE AND FUNCTION:

Every client has the following rights:

- The right to an individualized vocational evaluation program
- The right to be an integral part of the vocational evaluation planning process
- The right to have all test results explained at an appropriate level of understanding
- The right to have all facets of the vocational evaluation process, including behavioral observations and recommendations explained in a manner that facilitates understanding
- The right to express his/her views as an integral part of the planning, assessment and recommendation process
- The right to appeal any portions of the assessment process, results and recommendations to the Chief Evaluator on a case-by-case basis
- The right to have all information regarding the case remain confidential. (See DRS Policy and Procedures Manual.)

The client has the right to be referred for other services which will maximize their independent living functions or assist them with other life problems when the evaluator has determined that the client does not have gainful, integrated employment capabilities at the conclusion of the vocational evaluation process.

VOCATIONAL EVALUATION REPORTS

DEFINITION:

A vocational evaluation report is a well planned, carefully written means of communicating vital vocational information about a client. It is a studied, permanent record of significant vocational data observed as the client and the Evaluator interact in various types of work and work-like situations. It puts the evaluation plan, action, results, reasons and interpretation of the evaluation in writing. It often includes a picture of the client's worker traits as they compare to minimum requirements of selected jobs or

work areas, physical capacities, learning ability, personal characteristics, social competence, other vocational factors, and future recommendations. It may also provide a prescriptive-descriptive sequence of experiences that are aimed at maximizing a person's vocational potential." VEWAA GLOSSARY, Materials Development Center

Evaluation Report Policy

Every client served in vocational evaluation must have a written, functional vocational evaluation report that is interpreted with the individual and disseminated to the referral source in a timely fashion.

Resource Utilization

STAFFING OF INDIVIDUAL CASES PRIOR TO FINAL VOCATIONAL EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

Clients served in evaluation usually present complex rehabilitation problems. Resolution is facilitated by collaboration with other rehabilitation professionals to gain additional ideas and approaches. In larger centers, staffing with other Evaluators is readily achieved. Larger centers also have other professional staff to assist the Evaluator in developing recommendations. In the smaller centers, the Evaluator is encouraged to staff the case with the local field counselor and/or consult by telephone with other DRS Vocational Evaluators. For example, contact with WWRC Vocational Evaluators is very appropriate for determining criteria for entry level training programs, determining the need for situational assessment, or for determining the need for further services at WWRC using face validity career exploration and evaluation devices.

Contact with other Evaluators in the state or any of the Chief Evaluators is also appropriate when dealing with complex results of psychometrics or commercial work sample systems. The recommendation is "when in doubt, call your colleagues".

Characteristics of Vocational Evaluation Reports

The vocational evaluation report communicates the outcome of the assessment, including instruments used, test results, behavioral observations, professional judgments, and recommendations, including other services that utilize client assets, remove vocational barriers and otherwise lead to successful vocational placement.

LENGTH OF VOCATIONAL EVALUATION REPORTS:

ALL INFORMATION IN A VOCATIONAL EVALUATION REPORT IS RELEVANT TO THE CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

THE LENGTH OF THE VOCATIONAL EVALUATION REPORT IS GUIDED BY THE PRINCIPLE: IF THE INFORMATION CANNOT BE USED TO SUPPORT, SUGGEST, EXPLAIN, OR RECOMMEND, THEN IT SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE VOCATIONAL EVALUATION REPORT.

PROCESSING TIME:

The Evaluator should take no longer than an average of five working days from the conclusion of the evaluation process to the completion of the vocational evaluation report. The support staff should take no longer than an average of two working days to complete the typing and mailing of the report.

CONTENT:

A vocational evaluation report is written to meet the vocational needs of the client and to respond to the questions raised by the referral source and the client. All reports shall be related primarily to vocational interests, skills, abilities and barriers to employment and vocational/career aspects of the client and not to medical or psychological implications. This is not to say these implications are not important, but conclusions will not be made by the Evaluator that can be construed as practicing in these or other similar professions. The Evaluator is strongly encouraged to stay within his/her area of expertise.

The vocational evaluation report is an inclusive document. In other words, the content shall provide sufficient detail, information, and direction to allow the report to be used relatively independently. The report will serve as the primary source document.

The vocational evaluation report will include the following:

1. DOCUMENTATION AND JUSTIFICATION TO SUPPORT CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
2. USABLE INFORMATION ON THE CLIENT'S READINESS TO WORK
3. OBJECTIVE, DESCRIPTIVE BEHAVIORAL OBSERVATIONS

4. CONSIDERATIONS OF ALTERNATIVE JOB AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES
5. ALTERNATIVES TO GAINFUL, INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT INCLUDING LONG TERM CASE MANAGEMENT, SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT, VOLUNTEER, AVOCATIONAL ACTIVITIES
6. ANCILLARY SERVICES, ACCOMMODATIONS OR MODIFICATIONS TO REMOVE VOCATIONAL BARRIERS
7. CLIENT'S GOALS AND RESPONSE(S)(S) TO RECOMMENDATIONS

Types of Vocational Evaluation Reports

A variety of formats are utilized by various Vocational Evaluators and vocational evaluation centers. Many variations are related to the assessment processes employed and the needs of the referral source.

THE DRS CHIEF EVALUATORS HAVE DEEMED THAT THE NARRATIVE FORMAT BEST MEETS THE NEEDS OF THE REFERRAL SOURCES AND THE CLIENTS SERVED BY DRS.

NARRATIVE REPORT:

The *Narrative Report* consists of a variety of different headings usually starting with demographic data and ending with conclusions and recommendations. Under each heading, the Evaluator addresses, in essay form, the results and/or conclusions of findings according to topic area.

Typical Narrative Report Headings:

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Client's Name:
Address:
Telephone #:
SS#:
Case Number (optional)
Sex:
Age:
Date of Birth:
Counselor/Referral Source:
Date(s) of Evaluation:
Date of Report:
RSA or Disability Code:

I. REASON FOR REFERRAL

The basic reason for referral (from the vocational evaluation application) is listed along with the rehabilitation problem(s). A brief summary of the individual's history (social, academic, work and disability) is also given.

II. INSTRUMENTS OF VOCATIONAL EVALUATION

All instruments used or previous data considered are listed (such as medical information, psychological data, scholastic testing, etc.).

III. VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

The actual evidence of the vocational evaluation instruments are given and explained in sufficient detail to back-up the conclusions and recommendations. Additional information about what each test or instrument measures may be included in the "Appendix" section.

IV. CAREER EXPLORATION

Instruments, books and tools used in career exploration will be listed along with an explanation of the outcome of the results of the exploration. Interviews with the client will also be included.

V. BEHAVIORAL OBSERVATIONS

Descriptions are given of actual behaviors observed by the Evaluator, utilizing **action verbs and behavioral language**. Behavioral observations are included which support the "Conclusions and Recommendations" section. Behavior observations are always essential, especially when making decisions regarding clients who may be determined as "too severe" for gainful, integrated competitive employment.

VI. INDEPENDENT LIVING ASSESSMENT

An overview is presented of the client's ability to perform living functions on an independent basis. Areas needing remediation are also noted for inclusion in the "Barriers to Employment" section.

VII. JOB SEEKING SKILLS (JSS) ASSESSMENT

An overview of the JSS assessment process is presented. Deficits are identified both here and in the "Barriers to Employment" section.

VIII. BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

A list is made of the critical barriers to employment or independent living and rehabilitation services are identified from which the client may benefit in terms of an integrated, gainful employment outcome.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REMOVING BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

Specific recommendations are presented addressing each of the identified barriers to employment. All recommendations shall consider the utilization of assistive technology/devices when appropriate. This list is usually presented in order of occurrence in the body of the report, not necessarily by importance.

X. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Specific recommendations are usually divided into short and long range goals, differentiated by both the urgency of need and the skills to reach entry level employment. Short range goals will address immediate barriers that must be removed before any vocational goal can be considered. Short range goals also address training or other recommendations that allow the client access to entry level employment. Long range goals will address the client's maximum capabilities and focus more on optimum levels of achievement.

Other information may be included under headings such as; REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS, LEARNING STYLES or JOB RETENTION ASSESSMENT. These suggested headings are used when that specific client trait or need has been assessed or determined.

VOCATIONAL EVALUATION CLIENT RECORDS

Content and Organization

Each client admitted to the Vocational Evaluation Center has a record. The individual record contains information that influences vocational evaluation: referral data, diagnosis, rehabilitation problem(s) referral objectives, pertinent histories including (if available) medical, psychological, educational, social and employment, IVEP, results from psychometrics, work samples, staffing reports, case notes, correspondence, vocational evaluation report, follow-up reports and release(s) of information forms, if appropriate.

File Documentation

The Evaluator shall document that requested and planned services were provided to the client. All data relevant to measuring the client's potential to engage in the rehabilitation/vocational process are objectively recorded.

Maintenance and Indexing

The Chief Evaluator or supervisor ensures that Agency policies and procedures pertaining to maintenance of client records are understood and consistently followed. Each record is prepared chronologically to allow easy retrieval of data.

Security/Access/Disposal

Individual records are kept in a safe, secure and confidential location. Records will not be left out overnight or in places where viewing by unauthorized persons may occur.

No unauthorized personnel may access the files for any reason. The Chief Evaluator or supervisor determines access to the files following guidelines set by the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Department of Rehabilitative Services.

All records are disposed of according to guidelines established under the Code of Virginia/Department of Rehabilitative Services Policies and Procedures.

Confidentiality

All records and information are kept confidential following the guidelines established by the Code of Virginia and the Department of Rehabilitative Services Policies and Procedures.

JOB ANALYSIS

Knowledge of the Local Job Market/Vocational Training Programs

To make accurate recommendations, the Vocational Evaluator must have knowledge of locally available jobs and job characteristics. The Evaluator must also have knowledge of local vocational training programs, in terms of entry level skills, course content and other essential aspects of either the job or training program.

Job Analysis is a systematic study of what a worker does in performing a specific job. It breaks the job down into tasks and/or subtasks, determines how the job is performed, what is accomplished, where it is performed and why it is performed. It also determines the tools, equipment, machines, work aids and materials used in performing the job. The analysis determines the physical requirements, environmental conditions and specific vocational preparation required to perform the job.

Job Analysis is an essential ingredient in vocational evaluation. All Vocational Evaluators shall have the knowledge and abilities to perform job analysis for the following purposes:

1. TO DEVELOP KNOWLEDGE OF THE LOCAL JOB MARKET
2. TO DEVELOP KNOWLEDGE OF EXACTLY WHAT LOCAL JOBS REQUIRE
3. TO INCREASE KNOWLEDGE REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSFERABLE SKILLS FOR VOCATIONAL EVALUATION CLIENTS
4. TO ASSIST THE CLIENT AND THE REFERRAL SOURCE IN THE ASSESSMENT FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS
5. TO ASSIST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IVEP
6. TO PROVIDE CLIENTS AND EMPLOYERS WITH ASSISTANCE FOR JOB MAINTENANCE, RESTRUCTURING/MODIFICATION AND UPWARD MOBILITY
7. TO ASSIST SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PERSONNEL WITH APPROPRIATE JOB MODIFICATION KNOWLEDGE
8. TO PROVIDE ASSESSMENTS THAT ARE DIRECTLY RELATED TO AVAILABLE JOBS IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY
9. TO DEVELOP TEST BATTERIES AND WORK SAMPLES THAT REFLECT ACTUAL JOB DUTIES AS THEY ARE FOUND IN THE LOCAL JOB MARKET
10. TO PROVIDE EMPLOYERS WITH INFORMATION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS ACCORDING TO THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

All job analyses are conducted according to the methodologies prescribed in the DRS/Vocational Evaluation Job Analysis Manual.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

DRS training programs for Vocational Evaluators were and shall continue to be developed in order to insure state of the art knowledge and abilities. In-service programs are provided by the Chief Evaluators, Evaluators themselves and through the Annual DRS Vocational Evaluator's Conference.

Evaluators also share their expertise developed through experience, specific training or academics.

Field visits among DRS Evaluators are encouraged to share expertise and various vocational evaluation methods.

PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND SAFETY

All vocational evaluation centers shall be located, constructed, equipped and operated to protect the health and safety of individuals with disabilities

The following standards apply:

- There are yearly comprehensive externally conducted inspections of the premises completed by OSHA and the local Fire Marshall.
- Violations of any codes are corrected within a reasonable amount of time post citation.
- Certificates of completion of inspection and compliance are available upon request.
- There are emergency warning devices that will alert all persons with disabilities including special alarms for persons with hearing losses.
- There are definitive plans for methods of egress. These are posted in conspicuous places and all staff are made aware of the procedures.
- There are periodic evacuation drills.
- There are persons trained in emergency procedures, including first aid and fire suppression.
- There are suitable first aid supplies.

PROGRAM EVALUATION/QUALITY ASSURANCE

PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

The purpose of program evaluation for the Department of Rehabilitative Services' Vocational Evaluation Programs is to provide a system for producing information about the program and services which will enable it to provide optimum benefit to the program's consumers, to support the mission of the Department of Rehabilitative Services and to extend its efficiency and effectiveness to the community-at-large.

The major aims of the program evaluation/quality assurance system, as designed, are to assess the following areas:

- o Assurance of client benefit
- o Measurements of client satisfaction
- o Program and program staff capability
- o Documentation of program capacity
- o Provision of data for program needs and planning
- o Compliance with the Department of Rehabilitative Services Policies and Procedures
- o Fulfillment of DRS Vocational Evaluation Standards and Best Practices to include:
 - Admission criteria
 - Referral process
 - Program Orientation
 - IVEP Development
 - Goal Planning
 - Test Selection
 - Test Modification
 - Client recommendations
 - Services offered-Services received
 - Timeliness of services
 - Measures of effectiveness and efficiency
 - Results of services provided
 - Documentation
 - Vocational Evaluation Reports
 - Client characteristics-including disability types.

The general evaluation questions to be answered are:

1. Is the program meeting its goals and objectives?

2. Is the program serving the population it is designed to serve?
3. Are services being provided in a timely manner?
4. Is the program effective based on its utilization? For example; are the appropriate clients being referred for vocational evaluation services?
5. Is the program effective based on its impact?

METHOD

The program evaluation system is designed to be both a managerial and a quality assurance system. This means that the regional programmatic manager of vocational evaluation (Chief Evaluator) and the Quality Assurance Division of the Department of Rehabilitative Services will analyze the collected data and perform the annual vocational evaluation report audits.

The program evaluation component for vocational evaluation and Vocational Evaluators consists of five (5) primary activities:

1. CASE REVIEWS CONDUCTED BY QUALITY ASSURANCE PERSONNEL, CHIEF EVALUATORS AND PEERS. THE REVIEWS WILL RESPOND TO PROGRAM EVALUATION ISSUES OF:
 1. TIMELINESS
 2. EFFECTIVENESS BASED ON IMPACT
2. EVALUATION RECOMMENDATION REVIEWS CONDUCTED MONTHLY BY A PROCESS OF FEEDBACK UTILIZING THE VRIS SYSTEM. RECOMMENDATION REVIEWS WILL RESPOND TO THE PROGRAM EVALUATION ISSUE OF:

EFFECTIVENESS BASED ON IMPACT
3. CONSUMER SATISFACTION REVIEWS CONDUCTED DURING THE EXIT INTERVIEW BY THE EVALUATION STAFF AND THE CHIEF EVALUATORS. SATISFACTION REVIEWS WILL RESPOND TO THE PROGRAM EVALUATION ISSUES OF:

MEETING THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
4. MONTHLY REPORTS THAT ADDRESS PRODUCTION, TIMELINESS AND ANALYSIS OF SERVICE PROVIDED. MONTHLY REPORTS WILL RESPOND TO THE PROGRAM EVALUATION ISSUES OF:
 1. OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

2. TIMELINESS

5. ANALYSIS OF CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS INCLUDING THE TYPE OF DISABILITIES SERVED. CLIENT CHARACTERISTIC'S ANALYSIS WILL RESPOND TO THE PROGRAM EVALUATION ISSUE OF:

IS THE PROGRAM SERVING THE POPULATION IT IS
DESIGNED TO SERVE?

Record Reviews focus on individual case documentation, appropriate referral information, IVEP development, appropriate orientation to the client, appropriate test selection and assessment procedures, appropriate and documented behavioral observations and appropriate reporting formats and content including the addressing of each report format area and conclusions and recommendations that address the needs of the consumer and that reflect community based programs and/or jobs.

Using the VRIS system, Chief Evaluators from each region examine a sample of evaluation reports. A comparison between implemented programs and what was recommended by the evaluator is completed. Extenuating factors for non-implementation of recommendations are noted. An analysis is conducted by the Chief Evaluator of the results in order to ascertain if the recommendations made are actually implemented and if not why.

Client satisfaction questionnaires are administered at the end of each client's vocational evaluation program. A monthly review of the responses is conducted by the Chief Evaluator. Reasons for dissatisfaction are examined for appropriate modifications and are implemented as required to assure maximum benefit and satisfaction by the consumer.

The vocational evaluation monthly numerical production report is compiled by each Chief Evaluator. The report is sent to the appropriate director . A review of the data is conducted to ascertain if production, utilization and timeliness standards are in keeping with individual and programmatic goals.

Client characteristics including the types of disabilities served by each evaluation center are gathered and reported on a monthly basis. A review of the data is completed by the Chief Evaluators to assure that the vocational evaluation program design and equipment as well as the expertise of the evaluation staff are meeting the needs of the clients referred for services.

ANALYSIS

Reviews of the Monthly Reports, Client Satisfaction Surveys and VRIS Data are conducted throughout the year by the Chief Evaluators for the purpose of comparing reported data with the goals and objectives of the vocational evaluation program.

At the close of the fiscal year, all data is collected, compiled, and measured against the program goals and objectives as well as the program evaluation issues to determine the degree in which each has been met.

The program evaluation/quality assurance effort will be examined annually by Chief Evaluators and appropriate managerial staff. The purpose of this review is to assess the usefulness of the program evaluation/quality assurance data and process in answering the vocational evaluation questions. Recommendations for program modification shall be considered by the Chief Evaluators. In addition to the program evaluation/quality assurance review, the Chief Evaluators will submit an annual "Vocational Evaluation Management Report" to Assistant Commissioners, Human Services Program Directors and Human Services Program Managers as appropriate.

The ultimate goal of the program evaluation/quality assurance is to ensure that people with disabilities have the opportunity to derive benefit from their rehabilitation efforts.

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